

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented system for providing annotated electronic documents, the annotations which are to be applied to the documents being stored in a first data storage, the documents being stored in a second data storage, the first data storage and the second data storage being at least one of physically separate and logically separate, said system comprising:

(A) an annotation component configured to determine, responsive to at least one user, at least one annotation to be applied to at least one document, including a selection resource to select at least a portion of the at least one document and to associate the at least one annotation therewith, and a mark-up resource to at least one of add and edit the at least one annotation, wherein the annotation is image data or text, wherein each annotation can be different from every other annotation;

(B) a reference component, responsive to the at least one user, configured to at least one of establish, traverse, indicate, and remove, at least one reference between the at least one portion and at least one of an other portion of the at least one document, an other document, and at least one other portion of the other document; and

(C) at least one merge component configured:
to retrieve the at least one document from the first data storage as document data,
to retrieve the at least one annotation to be applied to said at least one document from a second data storage as annotation data, and
to combine the annotation data and the document data to form a unitary single logical document, the single logical document displaying the annotation embedded seamlessly in the document data.

2. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a view component operatively connected to the annotation component to edit, responsive to the at least one user, the at least one portion of the at least one document selected by the selection resource.

3. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one merge component is further configured to display the single logical document as a representation of the at least one document.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the single logical document, and the document data is at least one of: XML format, binary format, image data, video data, and audio data.

7. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

at least one split component, responsive to said single logical document, configured:

to extract the annotation data and the document data from the single logical document,

to update the at least one annotation in the first data storage from the extracted annotation data, and

to update the at least one document in the second data storage from the extracted document data.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one annotation indicates an evaluation of at least one legal property relative to the at least one document.

9. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

at least one version component, configured to at least one of manage a history of changes and maintain at least one separate version for the at least one document and the at least one annotation applied thereto.

10. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

at least one schema configured to identify at least one tag in at least one of the at least one portion, the at least one document, and the at least one annotation.

Claims 11-12 (Canceled)

13. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, the at least one annotation being associated with the at least one user, the at least one document being accessible by the plurality of users including the at least one user, and wherein the merge component is further configured, responsive to a request for the at least one document from the at least one user, to limit the annotation data included in the single logical document to annotations associated with the at least one user.

14. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one annotation further includes at least one of: a pre-defined notation, a user-provided text, a user-defined attribute, a reference to a URL, and a reference to an other file.

15. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

16. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

(C) a report component, responsive to a user, configured to provide a report listing each annotation in the at least one document, and in visual correspondence thereto

a summary of each portion in the at least one document that is associated with each annotation; and

(D) a map component, responsive to the user, configured to list a summary of each portion in the at least one document, each annotation in the at least one document including the at least one annotation, and each reference from the at least one portion of the document, including the at least one reference, wherein each annotation and each reference is visually linked to a corresponding portion listed in the summary.

17. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one document is an intellectual property document.

18. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented system for providing annotated electronic documents, the annotations which are to be applied to the documents being stored in a first data storage, the documents being stored in a second data storage, the first data storage and the second data storage being at least one of physically separate and logically separate, said system comprising:

(A) at least one merge component, configured:
to retrieve the at least one document from a first data storage as document data,
to retrieve at least one annotation to be applied to said at least one document from a second data storage as annotation data, said document data including at least one element corresponding to a location of the at least one annotation within said document, wherein the annotation is image data or text, wherein each annotation can be different from every other annotation; and

to combine the document data and the annotation data to form a unitary single logical document displaying the annotation embedded seamlessly in the document data at the location;

- (B) at least one split component configured:
 - to extract the annotation data and the document data from the single logical document,
 - to update the at least one annotation in the first data storage from the extracted annotation data, and
 - to update the at least one document in the second data storage from the extracted document data; and

- (C) at least one version component, configured to at least one of manage a history of changes and to maintain a separate version for the document data and the annotation data to be applied thereto.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein at least one of the logical single document, and the document data is at least one of: XML format, binary format, image data, video data, and audio data.

21. (Previously presented) The system of claim 18, further comprising a schema configured to identify at least one tag in the at least one element, and logic to determine tags for at least one of the document data, the annotation data, and the at least one marked-up representation.

22. (Previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the annotation data further includes at least one of: a pre-defined notation, a user-provided text, a user-defined attribute, and at least one reference to at least one of: an element in the document, an element in an other document, a URL, and an other file.

23. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the document data is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product

description document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

24. (Previously presented) The system of claim 18, further comprising:

(D) a report tool, configured to provide, from the single logical document, a report listing a summary of elements in the single logical document and in visual correspondence thereto, each annotation in the single logical document; and

(E) a map tool, responsive to the user, configured to list, from the single logical document, a summary of each element in the single logical document, each annotation in the single logical document including the at least one annotation, and each reference in the single logical document including the at least one reference, wherein each annotation and each reference are visually linked to a corresponding element listed in the summary.

25. (Currently amended) In a computer-implemented system for providing annotated electronic documents, the annotations which are to be applied to the documents being stored in a first data storage, the documents being stored in a second data storage, a method for annotating documents, implemented by a computer system, said method comprising the at least one of sequential, non-sequential and sequence-independent steps of:

(A) determining, in the computer system and responsive to a user, at least one annotation to be applied to at least one document, including selecting at least a portion of the at least one document to be annotated, associating the at least one annotation with the at least one portion, and editing the at least one annotation associated with the at least one portion, wherein the annotation is image data or text, wherein each annotation can be different from every other annotation; and

(B) responsive to a user, at least one of establishing, traversing, indicating, and removing at least one reference from the at least one portion to at least one of an other portion of the at least one document, an other document, and at least one other portion of the other document; and

(C) retrieving, in the computer system, the at least one document from a first data storage as document data, retrieving the at least one annotation to be applied to said at least one document from a second data storage as annotation data, and combining the annotation data and the document data to form a unitary single logical document, the single logical document displaying the annotation embedded seamlessly in the document data.

26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25, further comprising:

providing, from the single logical document, a report listing each annotation in the at least one document, and in visual correspondence thereto a summary of each portion in the at least one document that is associated with each annotation; and

providing a map listing a summary of each portion in the at least one document, each annotation in the at least one document including the at least one annotation, and each reference from the at least one portion of the document, including the at least one reference, wherein each annotation and each reference is visually linked to a corresponding portion listed in the summary.

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the at least one annotation further includes at least one of: a pre-defined notation, a user-provided text, a user-defined attribute, a reference to a URL, and a reference to an other file.

28. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright

document, a product description document, a license document, a *sui generis* protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

29. (Withdrawn) A system for retrieving and storing a plurality of electronic documents and a plurality of annotations to be applied to the documents, the plurality of documents to be accessed by a plurality of users, the plurality of annotations to be accessed by at least a portion of the users, the system comprising:

- (A) at least one storage portion, to store at least one document and at least one annotation associated therewith;
- (B) at least one server to determine respective locations of the plurality of documents including the at least one document, and the plurality of annotations including the at least one annotation; and
- (C) at least one manager, to determine a location of the at least one document and at least one annotation to be applied thereto, stored in the at least one storage portion, and to at least one of retrieve from and store in, via the at least one server, the at least one document and the at least one annotation to be applied thereto, in the at least one storage portion; and to provide the at least one document with the at least one annotation applied thereto.

30. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, the at least one annotation being associated with the at least one user, the at least one document being accessible by the plurality of users including the at least one user, and wherein access to the at least one annotation applied to the at least one document is limited to the at least one user associated with the at least one annotation.

31. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the at least one manager determines, if the at least one document is read-only, to not store a further copy of the at least one document.

32. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, further comprising a version control to maintain at least one separate version of the at least one document and the at least one annotation.

33. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, further comprising at least one analyzer to at least one of manage, traverse, search, view, report and edit, via the at least one manager, the at least one document and the at least one annotation associated therewith.

34. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the at least one manager associates at least one reference with at least one of the at least one document and the at least one annotation, the at least one reference being to at least one of: an element in the document, an element in an other document, a URL, and a file.

35. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein at least one of the marked-up representation, the document data and the annotation data is at least one of: XML format, binary format, image data, and audio data.

36. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the at least one annotation indicates an evaluation of at least one legal property relative to the at least one document.

37. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the at least one annotation includes at least one of: a pre-defined notation, a user-provided text, a user-defined attribute, a reference to a URL, and a reference to an other file.

38. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 29, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generic protection

document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

39. (Withdrawn) In a computer-implemented system, a method for annotating electronic documents in an intellectual property environment, comprising the at least one of sequential, non-sequential, and sequence independent steps of:

- (A) providing at least one document;
- (B) determining at least one section of the at least one document to be annotated;
- (C) determining at least one annotation to be applied to the at least one section;
- (D) associating the at least one annotation with the at least one section; and
- (E) storing the at least one annotation for later retrieval, wherein the annotation is stored separately from the at least one document.

40. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 39, wherein determining the at least one section includes at least one of (i) indicating, responsive to the user, a scope of the at least one section and selecting the at least one section; (ii) selecting, responsive to the user, the at least one section from a plurality of pre-determined sections; and (iii) automatically or semi-automatically pre-determining a scope of the at least one section, and automatically, manually or semi-automatically selecting the at least one section.

41. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 39, wherein determining the at least one annotation includes at least one of: (i) selecting at least one pre-defined notation; (ii) receiving input text; (ii) selecting at least one user-defined attribute; (iv) receiving a reference to a URL; and (v) receiving a reference to a file.

42. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 41, further comprising the step of preliminarily determining a plurality of user-defined attributes including the at least one attribute.

43. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 39, further comprising storing the at least one document for later retrieval.

44. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 39, further comprising maintaining at least separate version for at least one of the at least one annotation and the at least one document.

45. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 39, wherein the at least one annotation is associated with at least one user, the at least one document being accessible by the plurality of users including the at least one user, further comprising limiting access to the at least one annotation to the at least one user associated with the at least one annotation.

46. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 39, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generic protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

47. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 39, wherein the at least one annotation indicates an evaluation of at least one legal property relative to the at least one document.

48. (Withdrawn) In a computer-implemented system, a method for annotating electronic documents in an intellectual property environment, the annotations indicating an evaluation of at least one legal property relative to at least the annotated electronic document, comprising the at least one of sequential, non-sequential, and sequence independent steps of:

(A) providing at least one document, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generic protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document;

(B) determining at least one section of the at least one document to be annotated, including at least one of (i) indicating, responsive to the user, a scope of the at least one section and selecting the at least one section; (ii) selecting, responsive to the user, the at least one section from a plurality of pre-determined sections; and (iii) automatically or semi-automatically pre-determining a scope of the at least one section, and automatically, manually or semi-automatically selecting the at least one section;

(C) determining at least one annotation to be applied to the at least one section, including at least one of: (i) selecting at least one pre-defined notation; (ii) receiving input text; (ii) selecting at least one user-defined attribute; (iv) receiving a reference to a URL; and (v) receiving a reference to a file;

(D) associating the at least one annotation with the at least one section; and

(E) storing the storing the at least one annotation for later retrieval, wherein the annotation is stored separately from the at least one document.

49. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 48, further comprising maintaining a separate version for the at least one annotation and the at least one document.

50. (Withdrawn) A computer-implemented system for managing an annotated electronic document in XML format, said system comprising:

(A) at least one merge component, to associate document data representative of at least one document, and annotation data representative of at least one annotation, to

be applied to the at least one document, said document data having an XML format and including at least one element corresponding to a location of the at least one annotation within said document; and to provide at least one marked-up representation of the at least one document, the at least one marked-up representation having the document data and the annotation data associated therewith; and

(B) at least one split component, responsive to said at least one marked-up representation, to extract the annotation data and the document data from the at least one marked-up representation;

(C) wherein the at least one annotation and the at least one document are at least one of stored logically separate and stored physically separate.

51. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 50, further comprising at least one version component, to at least one of (i) manage a history of changes and (ii) maintain at least a separate version for at least one of the document data and the annotation data applied thereto.

52. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 50, wherein the at least one annotation includes at least one of: a pre-defined notation, a user-provided text, a user-defined attribute, a reference to a URL, and a reference to an other file.

53. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 50, wherein the at least one document is representative of at least one of: a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

54. (Previously presented) The system of claim 18, further comprising:

an annotation tool, responsive to a user, configured to input annotation data to be applied to the at least one document, including a selection resource to select at least one element of the document data to be annotated, and a mark-up resource to at least one of add and edit annotation data corresponding to the at least one element;

an edit tool, responsive to a user, configured to select the at least one element, and to edit the at least one element, including a representation of the at least one selected element, and a representation of the at least one annotation data; and

a reference tool, configured to determine at least one reference to the at least one element and at least an other element of at least one document, and to enable the at least one reference to be traversed by the user.